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Sustainable development: implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development

Letter dated 7 August 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I wish to transmit the enclosed report on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 62/190, "Agricultural technology for development" (see annex).

Resolution 62/190 reflects the ongoing commitment of Israel to development, especially in the agricultural sector, and to the global effort to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. As the original initiator of the resolution and as a leader in the research and development of agricultural technology, Israel intends to continue its efforts at the upcoming session of the General Assembly to promote the principles and ideas established in resolution 62/190.

I would kindly request that the present letter and its annex be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 55 (a), of the provisional agenda.

(*Signed*) Gabriela **Shalev**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* A/64/150.

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Annex to the letter dated 7 August 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Implementation by Israel of General Assembly resolution 62/190 on agricultural technology for development

In December 2007, the General Assembly, at its sixty-second session, adopted a resolution initiated by the State of Israel entitled "Agricultural Technology for Development".

Recognizing that the international community is falling behind on its universally agreed upon development goals, the General Assembly emphasizes in resolution 62/190 that without vigorous implementation of all development commitments, the global community will fail to fulfil its obligations to the peoples of the developing world.

For the past 51 years, Israel's National Agency for International Development Cooperation — known by its Hebrew acronym, MASHAV — has demonstrated Israel's steadfast commitment to agricultural development cooperation. MASHAV's agricultural programmes focus on the introduction of modern agricultural and agro-technical methods designed to increase the levels, sustainability and quality of agricultural production.

Such initiatives are in alignment with the principles and strategies of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), an alliance that Israel fully supports.

Israel's own development experience — transitioning from a developing country into a developed one in less than six decades — has enabled us to design comprehensive and holistic development programmes for urban and rural settings, both of which are of critical importance and relevance to the developing world today.

Israel is a cutting-edge leader in terms of agricultural-related innovations in fields related to water management and irrigation, seeds and propagation, livestock and dairy management and know-how, and biotechnology. Achievements in these fields are the result of close cooperation between research centres, Government institutions and private companies, as well as the always-present need to find effective solutions to pressing challenges in Israel, in particular: lack of water and resources; small quantities of arable land; and a densely populated country with 7 million inhabitants.

Statement of commitment

In accordance with the Millennium Declaration, the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the Accra Agenda for Action and the seventeenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, this report provides a broad overview of the development agenda of MASHAV in connection with the implementation of the resolution on agricultural technology for development. For more than two years, Israel worked together with our partners from international institutions, non-governmental organizations and the private sector to implement resolution 62/190.

We acknowledge the positive results that have been achieved during the last two years, and we wish to emphasize that the implementation of the resolution in a comprehensive manner remains vitally important. In the context of the current international financial crisis, this resolution becomes even more important.

MASHAV's programmes and projects are part of Israel's international development cooperation agenda to assist the global efforts to overcome problems stemming from climate change, water shortages and soil degradation to ensure food security and the improvement of the sustainable management of limited natural resources.

Assessment of progress made since the adoption of resolution 62/190

Since the adoption of resolution 62/190, extensive efforts have been made by MASHAV and affiliated partners to integrate and implement the operative aspects of the resolution by encouraging new policies and strategies for sustainable development and by updating and adapting existing policies and plans to new challenges and opportunities.

1. MASHAV is committed to cooperation with the developing world following a "demand-driven" model. The principal concept of development projects is a "bottom-up" approach that focuses on human capacity-building and training aimed at initiating and enhancing the impact of development on the ground.

2. MASHAV supports the Accra Agenda for Action as a basis for a coordinated international effort to help address current development challenges. In this regard, the Accra Agenda for Action emphasizes the importance of country ownership as the cornerstone of any aid programme. Country ownership and the building of country capacity are of utmost importance to establishing meaningful priorities that help manage a country's development agenda.

3. In addition, MASHAV emphasizes the importance of research and development to address the aforementioned challenges. Regarding food security and environmental sustainability in particular, the development and dissemination of low-cost technological innovations in certain fields — such as alternative energy, irrigation and water — could have a significant impact on achieving development goals. More extensive partnerships between donors and research institutions in both developed and developing countries is necessary to ensure that science better serves the needs of the developing world.

4. Many of these initiatives are carried out in partnership with donor countries, United Nations organizations and international aid agencies. In the spirit of the Millennium Declaration and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness toward donor harmonization, Israel and its African partner countries have collaborated on development projects with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit — German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). Memoranda of understanding (MOU) have recently been signed between Israel and the United Nations Development Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the United Nations

Environment Programme, respectively, for cooperation in Africa. The challenge is to adapt traditional practices to contemporary technologies and standards related to certain fields, such as water management and irrigation, appropriate production practices and inputs, crop protection, post-harvest management, marketing and value addition.

5. Over the past two decades, Israel and its partner countries have established a number of demonstration projects in selected semi-arid regions in Africa. These projects were designed to showcase new technologies that intensify and diversify crop production with the goal of promoting a more efficient use of water through rationing and the installation of pressure irrigation systems. At present, Israel is implementing an innovative mini-sprinkler and drip irrigation system that requires a much lower level of atmospheric pressure than current systems. The new system, called Techno-agricultural Innovation for Poverty Alleviation (TIPA), lends itself to establishing individual market gardens in limited areas that contribute significantly to sustainable food production. By utilizing this system, African smallholder farmers can construct their own small water-rationing facilities.

6. Another programme currently being developed is the "Farmers of the Future". This new programme is designed to acquaint schoolchildren with modern agricultural technologies, thereby preparing a new generation of farmers to enter the domestic and global markets.

International conferences in Israel, cooperation with the academic level and private sector

7. In February 2007, an agreement was signed between MASHAV and the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT). The principal objective of this agreement is to develop and share know-how and technology, and strengthen the capabilities of national agricultural research institutions.

8. In November 2007, the Weitz Centre for Development Studies held a conference on poverty reduction entitled the "Rehovot Conference on Regional Development", in partnership with MASHAV and the Hebrew University's Faculty of Agriculture.

9. In November 2007, the Golda Meir Mount Carmel International Training Centre (MCTC) hosted the International Conference for Women Leaders, entitled "Women's Leadership for Sustainable Development". The conference focused on natural-resource management, sustainable development and the empowerment of women in rural areas in developing countries.

10. In June 2008, MASHAV hosted an international conference entitled "Israel and the African Green Revolution". Experts from Israel and the international community gathered to present and discuss varying approaches to agricultural development on the African continent, as well as effective approaches to alleviate the current food and water crises.

11. In December 2008, the Blaustein Institute for Desert Research (BIDR) of Ben Gurion University of the Negev hosted an international conference on drylands, deserts and desertification. The conference brought together leading scientists, government officials, non-governmental organization

leaders and the general public to discuss ways to combat desertification and increase the sustainability of dryland development.

12. At the recent World Water Forum in Istanbul in March 2009, Israeli experts participated in a session on the role of water in reducing poverty and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The Israeli presentation demonstrated the use and benefits of treating and using wastewater for irrigation in a manner that can be safe and beneficial to enhance food production and reduce poverty, particularly in dry regions.

13. From 5 to 7 May 2009, Israel hosted the International Exhibition for Technology in Agriculture, Agritech 2009. The gathering featured presentations on the latest technology and research in agriculture and related fields. During the exhibition, MASHAV took part in an international conference entitled "The Global Food Crisis: Meeting the Challenge".

14. In the framework of the seventeenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, Ambassador Haim Divon, Deputy Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and head of MASHAV, drafted a proposal on the creation of an international task force for agricultural training. The first meeting regarding this issue took place in Israel at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs late in June 2009.

15. The CleanTech 2009 international exhibition for clean technologies took place in Israel in June 2009. The CleanTech exhibition is a business gathering where companies, researchers and professionals display their newest developments, latest technologies and exceptional-quality services in the fields of environmental protection and "green" solutions, infrastructure, renewable energy, waste treatment and water treatment, desalination, harvesting, purification and filtration.

16. The International Water Technologies and Environmental Control Conference will be held in Israel in November 2009. The exhibition will focus on advanced irrigation systems, water management, wastewater treatment and "green" agriculture. Israel will present its latest innovations in the field of water treatment, such as suction-scanning technology, magnetic-based water treatment technology and electro-flocculation. Israel will also present other innovations, such as electro-coagulation, the Attached Growth Airlift Reactor (AGAR) and the Personal Purification System (PPS). Israel's initial response to the water shortages of the 1960s was to desalinize water by utilizing vacuum freezing techniques. Since then, Israeli companies have developed techniques including reverse osmosis to purify water. The Ashkelon Desalination Plant is the largest and most cost-effective desalination plant in the world. At present, Israel is in the process of assisting China in establishing the latter's largest desalination facility.

17. The Agricultural Research Organization (ARO) is the research arm of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and is responsible for most of the agricultural research conducted in Israel. Its research aims to improve existing agricultural production systems and to introduce new products, processes and equipment, thereby ensuring the foundation of Israel's future agricultural

development. ARO has an extensive research infrastructure that supports both basic and applied research conducted by PhD scientists, engineers and technicians. These individuals are organized into six institutes that arrange international conferences and events, such as this year's symposium of the Institute of Soil, Water and Environmental Sciences entitled "Agriculture in the Shadow of the Water Crisis" (May 2009). The Faculty of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Quality Sciences of the Hebrew University is a major partner in such agricultural research.

The Israeli agro-technology industry in developing countries

18. By participating in MASHAV's international cooperation projects, Israeli companies have gained vast experience and knowledge about the necessary technology for agricultural and rural development projects in developing areas. Based on this knowledge, the Israeli agricultural-technology industry developed equipment especially adapted to farming in areas with substandard infrastructure and harsh climates. These technologies include gravity drip irrigation kits, grain storage solutions, water and energy management, and others that are already in use in some areas with overwhelming success. Technology transfers from Israeli companies have been done in cooperation with Governments as well as international organizations, institutes and non-governmental organizations. The aim of the Israeli "agro-tech" companies is to strengthen contacts with international agencies and to develop and distribute technologies for the benefit of developing regions. One example of a recent successful cross-sector project is ADAMA, where an Israeli company established a cooperative settlement (similar to an Israeli "moshav") in Angola. In conjunction with the Angolan Government and international aid bodies, the local community received agricultural inputs, training and infrastructure for developing agricultural systems for crop production, consumption and selling to local markets.

19. Another successful example of a cross-sector project is a corporate university developed by the Israeli Irrigation Company. This programme is designed to help customers maximize the use from their micro-irrigation equipment. Through the University Professional Study Programme, the Israeli Irrigation Company educates over 500 agricultural professionals by bringing them together with industry experts to discuss the latest advances in agriculture. The programme also includes Professional Study Tours, which are 10-day educational expeditions. These tours give growers and irrigation dealers a competitive advantage by teaching first-hand about global advancements in irrigation technology from growers using drip systems in countries around the world.

Cooperation with Africa

20. MASHAV and USAID are joining forces to assist the development of agriculture in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia through a three-year programme that provides technological support and the transfer of modern agricultural technologies and practices.

21. In the province of Tigray, Ethiopia, Israel works in cooperation with the Millennium Village Initiative, a project based upon the idea that impoverished villages can succeed in meeting the Millennium Development Goals if they are empowered with practical know-how and useful technologies. Israel has dispatched a long-term agricultural expert to work side by side with the local farmers there.

22. The African Market Garden (AMG) is a project that aims to significantly enhance yields and lower risks on single-household plots in arid and semi-arid zones. The system is based upon a scientifically calculated mix of better crop varieties in combination with the introduction of innovative, low-cost, low-pressure drip irrigation systems which enable year-round agricultural activities in regions where subsistence farmers are generally restricted to farming only during the rainy season. This system makes it possible for smallholders to raise enough food for their families, with small surpluses for cash sale. MASHAV is now replicating this strategy in Africa in cooperation with local partner institutions and other development organizations, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and Finnish Cooperation.

23. Techno-agricultural Innovation for Poverty Alleviation (TIPA) is a project based upon the concept of the AMG which focuses on poverty reduction and crop productivity. TIPA is currently operating in four different sites in the Republic of Senegal and the Republic of South Africa. The project involves a small-scale horticultural production package developed by Israeli experts based on low-pressure drip irrigation, a mix of annual and tree crops and an "operative system" which promotes the principle of scientific irrigation by farmers.

Cooperation with Latin America

24. A MASHAV project in cooperation with USAID and the Republic of Nicaragua has been carried out in order to upgrade Nicaragua's agricultural and dairy production facilities and to introduce these industries to modern agro-technologies.

Cooperation with Asia

25. In January 2008, as part of an effort to promote the global campaign on "Green Technologies", Israel initiated the first Israel-Viet Nam videoconference on "Wastewater Treatment Technologies", in cooperation with the Company of Construction Technology and Equipment of Viet Nam (CONINCO).

26. An MOU has been signed between MASHAV and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam for the establishment of a dairy demonstration and experimental farm that will be based upon Israeli technology and know-how regarding how to, under local conditions, improve milk production.

27. In October 2008, MASHAV — in cooperation with the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) — organized a Seminar on Advanced Agriculture for Development.

28. The Sino-Israeli Demonstration Dairy Farm in Yongledian, China, continues to have a positive influence throughout the dairy industry of the region. Applying the latest Israeli technologies and expertise, it increased milk production in 2008 to an annual record high of over 10,000 kilograms per cow. The farm serves as a training centre for dairy producers for the People's Republic of China and neighbouring countries. MASHAV continues to operate the Xinjiang Sino-Israeli Demonstration Centre for Arid Zone Agriculture that was established in northwestern China in 2003.

29. Within the framework of cooperation between MASHAV and the Ministry of Agriculture of the Kingdom of Thailand, Israeli experts delivered 120 pomegranate trees brought from Israel. The project, located at Up Kapong in Phtchaburi District, was officially inaugurated in June 2008.

Cooperation with Central Europe and Eurasia

30. MASHAV operates an Agribusiness Consulting Centre in the Republic of Kyrgyzstan for the assistance of farmers interested in planning, financing and implementing advanced technologies in agriculture.

31. In November 2007, an agreement was signed between UNDP and MASHAV to upgrade the livestock sector in the Republic of Uzbekistan. The agreement includes the transfer of Israeli know-how, new technologies and training programmes.

Regional cooperation in the Middle East

32. In November 2008, a delegation of high-level water experts from the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan visited Israel to learn about Israeli water technology and techniques. The visit covered a range of subjects, including fertilization and pressurized irrigation, administration of urban waters, and treatment of recycled water for irrigation.

33. A regional agricultural programme that brings together the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Israel, the Palestinian Authority and the Danish International Development Assistance Agency (DANIDA) entered into its second five-year period. The programme addresses five main issues in the field of agricultural development (small ruminants, dryland agriculture, saline and marginal water resources, post-harvest technology and marketing, and aquaculture) and is governed by a semi-annual steering committee with representatives from all the aforementioned partners.

34. In March 2008, an MOU was signed between the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), MASHAV and the Egyptian Ministry of Agriculture on a Japan-Israel joint training programme for the Arab Republic of Egypt. The main purpose of the training is to provide agricultural courses in arid and semi-arid areas.

Other international agreements, trilateral cooperation and partnerships with international organizations

35. In March 2007, Nigeria and MASHAV signed a "Cooperation Framework for Collaboration in Human Capacity-Building and Rural Agro-sector Development".

36. In July 2008, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, MASHAV and the German GTZ signed a trilateral Declaration of Intent to carry out the political will expressed by the heads of their respective Governments to promote cooperation on enhanced irrigation agriculture capacity in Ethiopia. The focus is on the development of small-scale irrigation capacity-building strategies for the efficient utilization of water resources by the communities and individual farm households to increase productivity and income.

37. In August 2008, MASHAV and the Agricultural Development Bank Limited of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal (ADBL) signed an MOU.

38. In November 2008, MASHAV signed an agreement with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to assist developing countries to reach the Millennium Development Goals through a joint programme focused on capacity-building.

39. In December 2008, MASHAV signed a partnership agreement with the United Nations Development Programme regarding cooperation for the support of developing countries, mainly in Africa. According to the agreement, Israel will share its expertise and technological know-how in the fields of agriculture, water, food, health and education.

Appendix

2007-2009 Israel's programme of work for the implementation (MASHAV) of resolution 62/190

	2007	2008
Number of participants in Israel in training programmes in agriculture	920	979
Participants in on-the-ground courses on agriculture	2 966 in 29 countries	3 185 in 33 countries
Short-term consultancies abroad in agriculture and related fields	73	46
Long-term consultancies in agriculture (Israeli experts posted and working with developing countries, sharing agricultural technologies and know-how)	7	9
Number of courses in Israel in agriculture	50	57
Number of courses abroad in agriculture	61	42